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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
CENTRAL UTAH PROJECT
TOPAZ, UTAH

JAPANESE RED CROSS SUPPLIES

DISTRIBUTED AT TOPAZ

by

Russell A. Bankson

PROJECT REPORTS DIVISION
Historical Section

Topaz History
H2.08⁵

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TOPAZ, UTAH

February 23, 1944

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When the Swedish exchange ship, Gripsholm, picked up American repatriates at a neutral Portugal port, on the east coast of Africa last fall on its second exchange trip, it also loaded on a great quantity of food and other supplies gathered in Japan by the International Red Cross and sent to Japanese nationals in the United States. This shipment, in due course of time, was divided among the various relocation centers and internment camps, for distribution to individuals.

The allotment to Topaz included a shipment of 300 tubs of soy sauce; 14 tubs of bean paste; 2 cases of drugs, (which were turned over to the Topaz Hospital Pharmacy for use in the hospital); 46 cases of green tea, and various other incidental items, including a case of musical instruments and a case of books. In addition to these, a number of packages which had been re-shipped from internees at the Santa Fe camp to individuals in Topaz were received and delivered direct.

When these items were checked in by the Topaz mess management, the Community Council was notified of the inven-

tory and asked to assume the responsibility of creating an issai committee to distribute the goods throughout the center.

The goods were officially received by Mr. T. Satonabe, chairman of the Spanish Joint Committee and Mr. K. Nakajima, chairman of the Food Committee of the Council. The distribution was handled by a committee of thirty-four Spanish Consul block secretaries and thirty-four block managers.

The Council requested permission from Mr. Roscoe S. Bell, acting project director in the absence of Mr. Charles F. Ernst, to hold a "ceremony of acknowledgement", called "Judoohiki" in the new civic auditorium on the afternoon of Sunday, February 20. This permission was granted and plans were made to present a program which would express the thanks of Japanese nationals in Topaz for the remembrance on the part of donors in Japan.

The ceremony got under-way in the auditorium at 2:30 p.m., the program being divided into two sections. About 1000 persons, practically all issai, were present.

In the first part, Chairman S. Suzuki, secretary of the Spanish Joint Committee, called upon members of the issai committee in charge for brief statements. Mr. Nakajima, reported on the procedures of acknowledging receipt of such food matters on behalf of the Japanese nationals of the center. Mr. M. Tsukamoto, the oldest issai of the

center, expressed the appreciation of the issei on receiving the shipment of articles through the Red Cross.

Right after Mr. Tsukamoto had spoken, Mr. Bell was called to the platform and spoke briefly, pointing out that this celebration was a symbol of the peace to come and gave thanks to the Red Cross for bringing these goods safely through to those for whom they were intended. He pointed out that it is significant that this period is the beginning of the Red Cross roll call and that this service on the part of the Red Cross is emblematic of its service to a world at war.

Mr. T. Matsuno read the draft of a cable to be sent to Japan acknowledging receipt of the shipment and expressing the appreciation of the Japanese nationals of the center. Chairman Sasaki gave the closing remarks.

The entire program was given in Japanese, the only English exception being the brief message by Mr. Bell.

The second part of the program was given over strictly to entertainment in the form of Japanese classic dances and Japanese string instrumental numbers.

The entire shipment was on display in front of the auditorium stage, and immediately after the program concluded, at 4:30 p.m., the items were distributed to the various blocks by the committee in charge, which had worked out a system of allocating quantities to every block, according to its population so that the ratio for each individual throughout the center was equal.

The entire program was conducted in an orderly and dignified manner, without demonstrations.